



NYC

Unity

Project



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Letter from First Lady Chirlane McCray



For so many people – including me – New York City is the first place they ever truly felt at home. This is a city where 8.5 million people from all different backgrounds live and work together, and where everyone can find a sense of community.

That's what makes our city such a special and vibrant place. And it's why, for so long, folks who face discrimination and persecution elsewhere have made their home here.

That includes our LGBTQ community, a treasured part of New York City's past, present and future. Our LGBTQ New Yorkers contribute to the life of our city in countless ways – as leaders and public servants, as workers and entrepreneurs, as artists, thinkers and activists.

The de Blasio administration and our partners across the City work hard every day to stand up for all members of our LGBTQ community. In recent years we have worked to make our schools safer and more affirming for our LGBTQ students and staff. We stood against bathroom bigotry and made sure transgender New Yorkers can get an ID that reflects who they are. We stepped up our efforts to prevent HIV and opened up beds for homeless LGBTQ youth who need a safe place to sleep.

Even with all this progress, we still have much work to do. And that's especially true when it comes to our LGBTQ youth, who face unique challenges and significant barriers to opportunity and overall wellness.

Half of LGBTQ youth in New York City report feeling sad or hopeless over extended periods of time. LGBTQ teenagers are more likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to be rejected by their families and forced into homelessness. They are also more likely to be subject to dating violence and to spend their school days hiding from bullying behavior, instead of learning in peace. And tragically, LGBTQ young people are more than three times more likely to attempt suicide than non-LGBTQ youth.

We can do better for our young people. This blueprint is the City's pledge to do better, and an articulation of our historic, citywide commitment to supporting LGBTQ youth.

With considerable new resources and a comprehensive, community-centered approach, we will break down the cultural and social barriers that hold LGBTQ youth back. We will work to reach every single young person who identifies as LGBTQ with the services they need to be well, so no one falls through the cracks. And even as the Federal Government undermines key protections and supports for these vulnerable young people, we will expand and strengthen them.

Together, we can help make New York City the safest place in the nation for LGBTQ youth. And we will make sure that all of our city's young people – regardless of who they love or how they express their identity – can be safe, supported and healthy as they proudly call New York City home.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chirlane McCray". The signature is fluid and cursive.

First Lady Chirlane I. McCray

Understanding Our Challenge



...even in a city that is relatively well-positioned to serve LGBTQ youth, many vulnerable young people fall through the cracks.

New York City has been a major center of life for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) community for decades. The birthplace of the modern LGBTQ¹ rights movement, our city has long been a leader in the fight for dignity and equality for all.

Given our history, it is no surprise that most youth who identify as LGBTQ in New York City —whether they are native New Yorkers or moved here from other parts of the country or world — grow and flourish and find strength in the support of their friends, families and communities. In fact, statistically, New York City's LGBTQ youth fare significantly better than national averages. This is at least in part because New York City provides a wide range of services that support LGBTQ youth, from educational programs in our schools to shelter programs for homeless youth to mental health services.

But historically, these services haven't always been as coordinated as they should be. And not all LGBTQ youth know about the supports in place for them. That means, even in a city that is relatively well-positioned to serve LGBTQ youth, many vulnerable young people fall through the cracks.

Evidence demonstrates that New York City's LGBTQ youth are far more likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to experience an array of social, physical and mental health challenges.² Other facets of young people's identities and



Credit: Mayoral Photography Office

¹Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male (Intersex Society of North America). Many intersex people consider themselves part of LGBTQ communities, and sometimes the "I" is added to the acronym. While this blueprint focuses on LGBTQ youth, the City is committed to incorporating the voices and needs of Intersex people into the programs and services we provide.

²LGBTQ youth refers to youth who self-identified as gay, lesbian, transgender and/or questioning of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Sexual orientation was ascertained with the question: "Which of the following best describes you?" Youth who responded "homosexual," "gay or lesbian," or "bisexual" were categorized as LGBTQ. Gender identity was assessed with the question: "A transgender person is someone whose biological sex at birth does not match the way they think or feel about themselves. Are you transgender?" Youth who reported "Yes, I think of myself as a boy/man," "Yes, I think of myself as a girl/woman," "Yes, I think of myself some other way" were categorized as LGBTQ. Youth who responded

experiences, such as race, ethnicity, class, ability and immigration status, often further determine their access to opportunities for success and happiness.³ A 2015 survey that asked youth to report on their experiences over the previous 12 months found alarming results⁴:

LGBTQ youth in NYC

21.6%
of LGBTQ youth in New York City experienced physical dating violence

21.6%
experienced sexual dating violence

10.8%
lived away from parents or guardians because they were kicked out, were abandoned, or ran away from home

20.4%
attempted suicide

24.5%
were bullied on school property



We must work to make sure that every LGBTQ youth knows that New York City is there to support them.

LGBTQ youth also experience disproportionate economic, housing and food insecurity. A 2015 survey of homeless and unstably housed youth in New York City found that over half identified as LGBTQ.⁵

All of these statistics underscore the urgency of our challenge. There are far too many LGBTQ young people in our city who do not feel welcome in their homes or schools, or who don't feel safe in their communities, or even when alone with an intimate partner. There are far too many LGBTQ young people who don't know where to turn for help, whether for guidance and support or for critical health services.

To address these pressing needs, New York City must establish and strengthen immediate supports for LGBTQ youth in crisis while working to eliminate the root causes of the disparities they so often face. Existing services must be strengthened and better coordinated across the City so no young person falls through the cracks. And, we must work to make sure that every LGBTQ youth knows that New York City is there to support them.

³not sure" to the sexual orientation question or "I don't know" to the gender identity question may be questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, and were categorized as LGBTQ. However, it is also possible that they did not understand the questions. Non-LGBTQ youth refers to youth 1) who self-identify as "heterosexual (straight)" to the sexual identity question and 2) who responded "No, I am not transgender" and "I do not know what this question is asking" to the gender identity question.

³Burdge, H., Licon, A. C., Hyemingway, Z. T. LGBTQ Youth of Color: Discipline Disparities, School Push-Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline. San Francisco, CA: Gay-Straight Alliance Network and Tucson, AZ: Crossroads Collaborative at the University of Arizona, 2014.

⁴New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Bureau of Epidemiology Services. Youth Risk Behavior Survey. New York, NY, 2015.

⁵NYC Office of the Mayor, Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence. 2015 Youth Count Report. New York, NY, 2015.



Our Vision



In New York City, we want all young people – no matter their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression – to be safe, supported and healthy.

To realize this ambitious but achievable vision, the City of New York is proud to share its citywide commitment to supporting and celebrating LGBTQ youth. This unprecedented blueprint outlines the beginning of a coordinated, community-centered approach to address the unique challenges that LGBTQ young people face in our city, deepen investments in key LGBTQ resources and programs and double down on our work to make New York City the most welcoming and affirming city in the world.

Sixteen agencies across the City came together to survey existing programs and services, identify gaps and assess needs. We will work collectively to address the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ young people, using an approach that recognizes the intersecting oppressions they endure based on color, neighborhood, class, ability, immigration status, language and many other factors. There is a long way to go, but by reaching LGBTQ youth where they are – where they live, where they learn, and in their communities – the City can help make sure all of our young people have the opportunity to lead full lives and reach their potentials.

Current Participating Agencies:

**Administration for
Children’s Services**

**New York Police
Department**

**Department of Health and
Mental Hygiene**

**Commission on
Human Rights**

Department of Education

Children’s Cabinet

**Human Resources
Administration**

**Mayor’s Office
Community Affairs Unit**

**Department of
Homeless Services**

**Commission on
Gender Equity**

**Mayor’s Office to Combat
Domestic Violence**

**Mayor’s Fund to
Advance New York City**

NYC Health + Hospitals

**Mayor’s Center for
Faith and Community
Partnerships**

**Department of Youth and
Community Development**

**Mayor’s Office of
Operations**



...double down on our work to make New York City the most welcoming and affirming city in the world.

Safe



Every LGBTQ youth should be safe in New York City. Yet violence continues to plague the lives of far too many LGBTQ young people. They experience higher rates of intimate partner violence and bullying at school and online. And when LGBTQ youth are forced out of their homes because of abandonment, rejection or other reasons, they are especially vulnerable to violence and exploitation.

The City is committed to preventing and reducing violence in all of its forms, and to expanding and fortifying safe spaces throughout the City. We are working to help promote healthy relationships among young people, to build positive relationships between youth and the NYPD, to train educators to intervene before violence and bullying occurs and to give young people more safe places to go, in more parts of the city, at more times of the day. And through our efforts, we aim to address the structural violence that LGBTQ youth face, which is rooted in historical and contemporary injustices that perpetuate health inequities, such as access to quality care and safe living conditions.

By working with agencies and partners across the City, we will make New York City the safest city in the world for LGBTQ youth.

Where They Live

Expand services and hours at youth drop-in centers: The NYC Department of Youth and Community Development will establish its second 24-hour youth drop-in center and also provide specialized services for LGBTQ youth at the seven existing youth drop-in centers. These centers offer an affirming environment for LGBTQ teens who may have been forced to leave home or are otherwise in need of refuge.

Establish the first-ever LGBTQ shelter for young adults: In partnership with Council Member Ritchie Torres, in early 2017 the NYC Department of Homeless Services opened Marsha's House - the first LGBTQ-specific shelter in the adult system, named for famed LGBTQI activist Marsha P. Johnson. Marsha's House currently offers shelter to nearly 90 homeless young adults, 30 years and under, in a welcoming and supportive space providing targeted LGBTQ-relevant services and resources.

Provide young people in need with a safe place to sleep: Left with very few options, young people who age out of youth housing often fall through the cracks. To keep this from happening, and to make sure that beds are available for youth in need, the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development and the NYC Department of Homeless Services have begun collaborating to streamline access between the two services⁶. For those who age out of youth-specific residential programs, the City is streamlining the

⁶<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/reports/2016/90-day-homeless-services-review.pdf>



“I made it and it’s thanks to Marsha’s House and its workers. I couldn’t have made it without y’all.”

— Tarrik A,
Recent Marsha’s House Resident



“The RAPP Program has done so much for me. Before RAPP I went to a Catholic school where I was taught that “homosexuality and being different” was “wrong.” I was in a world of hate and prejudice and I hated myself and that was all that I could think about. As soon as I was able to join RAPP I was shown full support, acceptance, and care. RAPP has helped me make my voice heard and they appreciated that voice. They taught me to love myself, something I could never even think about without them.”

— Angelina B, 10th grader in Manhattan

transition process into the adult and family shelter system, including eliminating the additional screening and intake process. And, as some young people in the adult or family shelter system can be better served by youth shelters, intake staff in the adult and family system are now equipped to track vacancies in youth programs and identify specific open beds for eligible young people. This improved coordination between city agencies has expanded options for young people in need of a safe place to sleep.

Support healthy LGBTQ relationships: The City will expand and update trainings to promote healthy relationships among young people. Too often, existing trainings neglect LGBTQ experiences, even though these young people experience higher rates of partner violence than their straight and cisgender peers.

- **Healthy Relationship Training Academy:** The NYC Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence will update its Healthy Relationship Training Academy curricula to include LGBTQ-affirming training materials. These materials, which will reach more than 8,000 participants in the 2017-18 school year, will address teen dating experiences and challenges specific or especially relevant to LGBTQ students. These new materials and curricula will be developed with input from the NYC Human Resource Administration’s Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) Summer Peer Leadership Program Academy, which served over 150 youth leaders from over 80 different schools in 2017. Initial curriculum updates have expanded discussions on masculinity, femininity and nonconformity, as well as implemented the use of more inclusive gender pronouns.
- **Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP):** Through RAPP, the NYC Human Resources Administration will continue its ongoing work to train students in recognizing healthy relationships. RAPP workshops will reach over 3,500 youth, enabling them to recognize and intervene in instances of relationship abuse. RAPP will also continue to provide relationship counseling services, reaching 7,500 youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities. RAPP will also expand awareness efforts for parents and families, improving their understanding of relationship violence in the lives of the City’s young people and of available strategies to help them stay safe.



Where They Learn

Open single occupancy bathrooms in every school:

By January 2018, the NYC Department of Education will make single occupancy restrooms available in schools citywide. These restrooms will better support students with additional privacy needs, including transgender and gender-nonconforming students as well as students with medical conditions and disabilities. Each restroom will have clear and appropriate signage, safety locks with administrative keys and free menstrual products in middle and high schools.



“I have had the privilege of launching the Out For Safe Schools Badge Campaign at two different schools over the last 3 years. In both schools, almost every teacher, administrator, and staff member (including security) opted to participate by displaying a badge. Once displayed, students will say things like ‘Why do all the teachers have those?’ and ‘Thank you! I know I can be myself in your class.’

This year, one of my students came out as a Transgender Male. While brainstorming supports for him before the year started his sister said, ‘I know you will be safe in your history class because that teacher always wears that rainbow badge around her neck every day. That means she will have your back.’ The visibility alone makes students be and feel safer. LGBTQ students in schools with this program are safer because the staff members are aware and opting to create inclusive and affirming environments of school and class culture.”

— High School Health Educator in Queens

Expand and strengthen network of visible school allies:

The NYC Department of Education will expand the OUT for Safe Schools™ Badge campaign, a national initiative of the Los Angeles LGBT Center and GSA Network that supports school staff in outwardly identifying themselves as allies to LGBTQ and gender non-conforming students. Since 2015, over 20,000 badges have been issued to staff at more than 250 NYC schools. The City will train 400 additional school staff members who volunteer to participate in the campaign, and provide them with badges and ongoing support for

their schools. The trainings will help staff recognize and interrupt bias-based remarks, use inclusive language and refer students to appropriate resources.

In Their Community

Expand safe and inclusive community spaces:

Through the “OUT for Safe Spaces” campaign, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene seeks to replicate the success of the OUT for Safe Schools program, by working in other spaces where young people congregate – including clinics, youth-serving organizations and faith based organizations. Non-school partners who take the OUT for Safe Spaces pledge are trained in how to create more inclusive spaces for their LGBTQ clients. This training covers how to address LGBTQ youth, including clarity on terminology and the importance of inclusivity for the health and safety of LGBTQ youth. By the end of the year, 100 partners will have taken the pledge to promote safe spaces.

Engage communities to stop violence: The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will develop new LGBTQ-specific educational materials for the Cure Violence program, which has helped reduce gun violence in the City through the use of community members as violence interrupters. The new materials will help expand community understanding of the relationship between gender identity and expression, power and violence, including violence against the LGBTQ community.

Foster positive relationships with police: The NYC Department of Education will partner with the New York Police Department to provide Know Your Rights trainings to Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) in schools, beginning in fall 2017 with a pilot program for targeted schools before expanding in clusters to GSAs across the five boroughs. LGBTQ youth – especially transgender and gender non-conforming youth – can face hostility in a variety of environments, so it is especially important that they understand how and when to seek support from a police officer. The workshops also offer NYPD officers a chance to hear directly from LGBTQ students in their communities.

Supported

All LGBTQ youth should feel supported in New York City. Whether at home, in school or elsewhere in the community, they should be able to turn to trusted adults who understand what they're going through, support them unconditionally and can guide them to affirming resources. And they should have access and exposure to peer networks that will do the same.

That's why the City is committed to fostering allies and strengthening supports for LGBTQ young people among the people who matter most in their lives: families, peers, teachers, faith communities and employers. By reaching LGBTQ youth where they live, learn, worship and work, we can help make the environments around them more empowering, respectful, affirming and supportive.

Where They Live

Facilitate family conversations: In partnership with LGBTQ-affirming community organizations, the NYC Commission on Human Rights will host workshops for parents to help facilitate supportive family conversations around sexuality, gender identity and expression, and the challenges that LGBTQ youth face. These workshops will provide a venue for parents and youth to broaden their understanding of LGBTQ identities, especially transgender and gender non-conforming identities.

Tackle stigma among families: The City will launch an extensive communications campaign to encourage parents, caregivers and chosen families of LGBTQ youth to accept and affirm youths' identities. The campaign will make parents and families aware of available City resources, tools and support systems that can help them better understand the experiences of the young people in their care.



Where They Learn

Incorporate LGBTQ-content in the classroom: To empower teachers to incorporate age-appropriate LGBTQ content into their lessons, the NYC Department of Education is partnering with content providers such as the Lambda Literary Foundation, WNET and History UnErased to develop lesson plans, resources and discussion guides for subject areas across grade levels. Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, these resources will be available to all City teachers across grade levels and subject area. Through programs designed to help teachers and students utilize these resources in the classroom, we will expand LGBTQ inclusive curriculum across all boroughs. NYC students should graduate from high school with an awareness and understanding of the amazing contributions of the LGBTQ community.



Engage teachers to share learning experiences and best practices:

The inaugural LGBTQ Inclusive Curriculum Conference was held in June 2017 and reached more than 150 educators from Pre-K to 12th grade across all five boroughs. The conference, which provides an in-person opportunity for educators to learn and grow in their teaching practices, will more than double in size, supporting between 350 and 400 educators. These educators cover subjects such as social studies, English Language Arts and music, and teach students from our earliest learners in Pre-K all the way through special programs for overage high school students. With an increase in attendees comes the opportunity to offer more workshops throughout the day, a chance for networking across the city and a commitment by the City of New York that teachers should be supported in teaching diverse content to our students.

Strengthen and expand GSAs: The NYC Department of Education will expand its support for GSAs in schools, which already exist across the five boroughs. Expanded support will include key trainings for any GSA that requests them, including in the areas of healthy relationships, suicide prevention and leadership. In spring 2018, more than 300 advisors and student leaders will come together for an inaugural GSA Summit to develop strategies to support the growth of new and existing GSAs. Additionally, every guidance counselor will be equipped with a resource guide to help students start a GSA at their school.



“In our experience at Kolot Chayeinu/Voices of Our Lives, it is crucial for LGBTQ young people, perhaps especially trans youth, to find a warm welcome in their faith community, a welcome that says in effect, ‘Come as you are.’ To arrive at that welcome, though, means a lot of work on the part of clergy, staff and members to learn to use new pronouns, to ensure there are clearly labeled gender-neutral bathrooms, to show photos of LGBTQ youth on websites and in social media, and to hire queer and trans staff and teachers who can serve as especially needed role models. We are delighted that the First Lady is launching this city-wide initiative to teach us all.

— Rabbi Ellen Lippmann,
Kolot Chayeinu/Voices of Our Lives, Brooklyn



“I am a newfound Syrian resident of NYC who’s journeying through an array of opportunities and downfalls in life. Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC) is an affirming and identifying agency right from its name; it gives me a sense of belonging, amicability, and inspiration. The Career Advance program within GMHC helps LGBTQIA youth, who are HIV negative, also take part in the breadth of social services available at GMHC. I am grateful for the encouragement and support I receive as a participant in the career advance program. I will be attending a LGBT expo because of the direct referral from Career Advance job developers and I am extremely grateful and excited to attend.”

— R.A., YouthPathways Youth Client, Manhattan



In Their Community

Build a supportive faith network: The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the NYC Commission on Human Rights and the NYC Community Affairs Unit’s Center for Faith and Community Partnerships will engage faith leaders to develop a network of LGBTQ-affirming faith communities. Faith communities often serve as important sources of guidance and values for youth and their families, but they can also sometimes marginalize LGBTQ youth, furthering their feelings of exclusion and undercutting their self-worth. To launch this network, the City will host a summit of more than 100 faith leaders this winter, with the goal of engaging hundreds more faith leaders over the next two years to help reduce stigma, promote respect and improve understanding of LGBTQ issues.

Unlock employment opportunities: The City is now providing targeted employment assistance to LGBTQ youth, noting their unique challenges in the workplace. The NYC Career Pathways framework, which helps New Yorkers access job training and career opportunities, will tailor its resources to better serve the LGBTQ community, including the Human Resource Administration’s YouthPathways, which reaches up to 14,500 youth each year. Every participating youth client will have the option of enrolling in the tailored career services programming.

Foster supportive workplaces: By summer 2018, following extensive community engagement, the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development and the Center for Youth Employment will develop a best practices manual for NYC youth workforce providers and employers to implement LGBTQ-friendly practices. Agencies across the City will partner with the youth workforce provider community to create the manual, which will promote cultural sensitivity and help employers make LGBTQ youth feel supported in the workplace and on the job hunt.

Healthy

In New York City, all LGBTQ youth should have the opportunity to lead healthy lives. That means having access to healthcare professionals who understand their unique needs in terms of both mental and physical health, as well as comprehensive programs for treatment and prevention. It also means having the physical, social and emotional tools to be well.

The City is committed to promoting the health and well-being of all young people, including LGBTQ youth. The first step is making sure young people know about the many health resources available to them and then reaching them where they are with critical services.

Where They Live



Train therapists to foster healthy family relationships: In partnership with the NYC LGBT Community Center, the NYC Administration for Children's Services is supporting the LGBTQ Institute for Family Therapy (LIFT) free training programs for therapists, equipping the City's preventive services mental health clinicians to guide 300 families in accepting, affirming and supporting LGBTQ youth. Through a six-month certification program, LIFT participants build knowledge and skills in coaching families of diverse backgrounds through understanding and accepting youths' gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations.

Tailor NYC Well resources: Through ThriveNYC, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is sharing a list of LGBTQ-knowledgeable providers with all NYC Well staff. NYC Well is New York City's one-call, one-click connection to mental health care (1-888-NYC-WELL). This free and confidential helpline is available for anyone who needs it. Now, when LGBTQ youth seek help and support, counselors and peer specialists will be better equipped to direct them, via a user-friendly database, to culturally competent services that address their specific needs. The City is also reaching out to additional LGBTQ providers to encourage their inclusion in the database.

Spread the word about critical services: To increase awareness of available culturally competent services, the City will implement a communications campaign to reach LGBTQ youth in all five boroughs. The campaign will provide information to LGBTQ youth on City services that are available, affirming and accessible to all gender identities and sexual orientations. In addition, the City will direct City agencies and City-funded provider organizations to adopt best practices and strategies to support LGBTQ youth.



Where They Learn

Train school staff: Recognizing that young people spend most of their time at school, the City will train school staff to better address the unique needs of LGBTQ students.

- **Mental Health Resources:** Through ThriveNYC, the City established a network of 100 School Mental Health Consultants. These are clinicians charged with helping schools meet the mental health needs of students in the 900+ schools without on-site mental health services. As part of our commitment to LGBTQ youth – and in partnership with the City Council – in 2017 the City trained all of these consultants to direct LGBTQ students to culturally competent care.
- **Sexual Health Resources:** The Office of School Wellness Programs trains staff on including LGBTQ experiences in the high school Condom Availability Program, which provided condoms and other informational health resources to 250 high schools in the last school year. High school-level educators, social workers, guidance counselors, administrators, parent coordinators and other school-based staff members who administer the program receive the required trainings. Participating staff will be better equipped to make youth feel comfortable accessing a range of sexual health resources and to provide referrals to adolescent-friendly and LGBTQ-affirming healthcare providers. Additionally, the City will guide high schools toward institutionalizing processes for referring students to culturally competent sexual health services.



“Saul is a 22 year old immigrant who came here from Mexico with his family while in his early teens. During this time of adjustment, he decided to come out to his family and was immediately met with disapproval and hostility from his father. He would soon end up in a foster boarding home where he remained until the age of 20. Since aging out of the system, he has been navigating adulthood mostly on his own with some assistance from his family. Upon meeting Saul, I discovered that he was interested in PrEP but was unsure if he could afford the cost of Truvada. He was recently denied various medical treatments for lack of insurance and had not received adequate healthcare since he left the group home. Oddly enough, a simple call to the NY State Marketplace rectified this issue and Saul’s Medicaid was reinstated.

He has been receiving PrEP for Adolescents program services since May of 2017. When asked about his experience with the PrEP for Adolescents program, Saul stated that it has helped him feel ‘healthier and more confident than ever.’ He feels even more secure in his lifestyle choices and is practicing safer sex, especially since starting PrEP. He is greatly appreciative of the ‘care and support’ he has received from Acacia Network, La Casa De Salud, and the staff at Casa Maria. In particular, he enjoys a great deal of ‘comfort’ knowing that he can openly discuss any of his ‘personal’ health issues with a program coordinator that he trusts. He feels welcome, and likes the ‘family environment’ here at Casa Maria.”

– Anthony Carbone, PrEP for Adolescents Coordinator, Casa Maria Community Health Center, The Bronx

In Their Community

Create Groundbreaking Provider Certification Program: NYC Health + Hospitals, the City’s public hospital system, has partnered with The Fenway Institute/The National LGBT Health Education Center to launch an intensive training program for physicians in culturally competent LGBTQ health services. By getting certified in this unique program – the first of its kind in the country – physicians will send a powerful signal to LGBTQ youth in need of care. NYC Health + Hospitals aims to put 500 clinicians through the pilot program by summer of 2018.

Provide affirming healthcare services to New Yorkers across the gender spectrum: NYC Health + Hospitals will train 50 healthcare providers to provide clinical care – including transition care – to gender expansive youth throughout the city. By Fiscal Year 2019, NYC Health + Hospitals will have emerging adult clinical programs that specialize in affirming health services for LGBTQ youth.

Prevent and treat HIV: The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has expanded support for youth with HIV and those at increased risk of contracting HIV, including three clinical sites to provide young men who have sex with men of color with risk screening, education and clinical care. The sites are also providing supportive services and patient navigation to reduce the behavioral health, structural, financial and psychosocial factors related to HIV risk. The City will also work to make sure that all young people – including LGBTQ youth – are aware of their right to consent to and receive HIV treatment and prevention services, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), without parental or guardian consent or notification.

Train Mental Health Clinicians: The City will continue to update, improve and standardize LGBTQ cultural competence training for the Mental Health Service Corps, a ThriveNYC initiative to place nearly 400 physicians and recently-graduated Masters and Doctoral-level clinicians in substance use programs, mental health clinics and primary care practices in high-need communities throughout the city. By

strengthening training, all Corps members will be better equipped to meet the needs of LGBTQ youth who seek services in primary care and behavioral health settings.

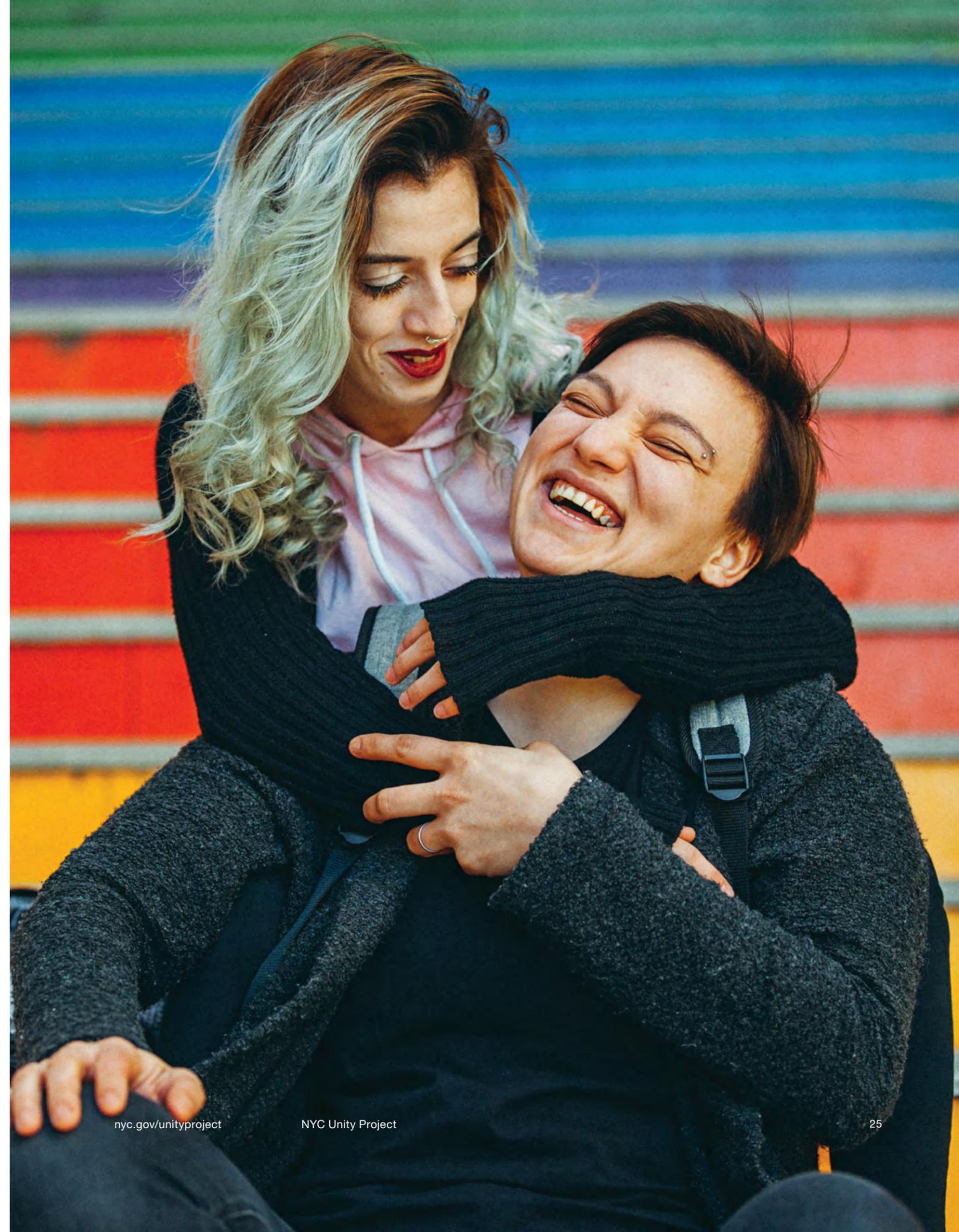
Combat substance misuse: The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will create a Comprehensive Drug and Alcohol Misuse Prevention Program. LGBTQ young people have higher rates of substance misuse than their heterosexual and cisgender peers. In fact, recent evidence demonstrates that LGBTQ youth in New York City are more than twice as likely as their heterosexual peers to misuse opioids. The prevention program will include two components, which are:

- *Community Coalitions:* The City will fund seven Community Coalitions to implement evidence-based interventions aimed at reducing alcohol and substance misuse among youth, including LGBTQ youth. These Community Coalitions will work with schools, parents, police and local businesses to address substance misuse by implementing local strategies tailored to communities they serve, including a variety of evidence-based strategies such as parent workshops, student engagement, and trainings for those who sell or serve alcohol.
- *Media Literacy Program:* The City will develop a robust Media Literacy Program to educate youth – through afterschool and youth programs, colleges and other efforts – on the media’s role in influencing decisions to consume alcohol and use prescription medication.

Collect better data: NYC Health + Hospitals is transforming its health records to more accurately capture information about patients’ gender identity and sexual orientation, including pronouns and other information that can affect quality of care. These data will aid clinicians in providing adequate resources and better equip City employees to serve New York’s many diverse populations within the larger LGBTQ community.



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Looking Forward



We can create a New York City that respects, supports and empowers LGBTQ young people no matter where they are.

The new wave of strategies in this blueprint will bring us closer to achieving our vision of a New York City where all LGBTQ youth are safe, supported and healthy. But this is just the beginning.

We are already at work developing the next phase of this initiative, which will include additional opportunities for partnerships in City spaces such as public schools, health clinics, shelters and hospitals. And as we chart our path forward, we plan to fully engage community organizations and LGBTQ young people themselves. Through ongoing dialogue with these young people and the organizations who serve them, we can better understand not only the challenges LGBTQ youth face but also the tremendous value they bring to our city.

Together, we can make our city the safest place in the world to be LGBTQ. We can tear down stigma and discrimination, and bring an end to violence and exploitation. We can make sure every LGBTQ youth has access to the services and resources they need to be well. We can create a New York City that respects, supports and empowers LGBTQ young people no matter where they are, a city where LGBTQ young people aren't just tolerated, but celebrated for being who they are.

That's a city worth the work it takes to get there. There is a long road ahead of us, but New York City stands ready to continue this work and send a loud and clear message to the world: ours is a city for everyone.





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